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Ravalli County Commissioners



Bitterroot National Forest

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Bitterroot National Forest Suggests that you "Take A Hike"

Leave Fireworks at home, and Enjoy YOUR National Forests on the 4th of July

HAMILTON, MT; JUNE 27, 2007. --- With the approach of the 4th of July weekend, officials from the Bitterroot National Forest encourage folks to enjoy a hike, plan a picnic, take your kid – or your parent – fishing, or find some other way to enjoy the National Forests in your backyard.

It is especially important for recreationists to remember that fireworks are not allowed on National Forest System lands. Fire crews have already responded to 8 wildfires; three were caused by lightning and five by humans. Fire danger is considered moderate but the potential for fires to start and spread quickly cannot be underestimated, especially as conditions warm up in early July.

All campgrounds and trailheads on the Forest are open and ready for visitors. Road and trail crews have begun maintenance work on many travel ways but users should be prepared for early season conditions. A few considerations will help ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment:

- **Fireworks are not permitted on National Forests.**
- **Be prepared for wet and muddy roads and trails, and downed trees over roads and trails.** Some high elevation roads are still partially blocked by snow drifts.
- **Watch for unstable snags and use extra caution when traveling through the burned areas.** Burned snags become less stable every year and can fall with little warning or cause.
- **Ensure your campfires are fully out before leaving them.** And **Pack it In – Pack it Out** is the best practice for all of your garbage.
- **All vehicles must stay on designated trails and routes.** Off road travel is both illegal and quite damaging this time of year when fragile soils are so moist.

Please stop by or call one of your local Forest Service offices to get the most current information we have about road and trail conditions. In observance of the July 4th holiday, Forest Service offices will be closed on Wednesday, July 4th.

Drive defensively, slow down and enjoy the scenery and your National Forests, and come home safely.

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